

# Indiana House of Representatives

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## News and Information

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### **COCHRAN VOWS SESSION-LONG FIGHT FOR SILVERCREST**

INDIANAPOLIS – State Representative William Cochran (D-New Albany) said today that preservation of the Silvercrest Children's Development Center will be his top priority for the 2006 session of the Indiana General Assembly, and lawmakers should be prepared to face several attempts to pass legislation designed to keep the facility open.

Cochran began his efforts on behalf of Silvercrest this week in the Indiana House when he attempted to amend language keeping the center in operation into a measure (House Bill 1114) that would create an "In God We Trust" license plate.

The lawmaker chose not to proceed with the amendment when House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) raised questions about whether the language had a similar subject matter to the bill.

"I had thought that the language was germane to the 'In God We Trust' bill because I thought God would look after the kids at Silvercrest, since the Daniels Administration made it clear it doesn't care about them at all," Cochran said.

"However, I chose to bow to the Speaker's wishes, since it was apparent the House majority would have supported his decision," Cochran continued. "Rest assured, however, that I will continue to look for a home for this language, because keeping Silvercrest open is so critical to the lives of the kids who are there."

Ever since Gov. Mitch Daniels and the state Department of Health have announced plans to close the center – which is a home for children who are autistic or have learning disabilities that cause them to struggle in traditional schools – parents and employees have joined together to stop the move. They have filed a lawsuit in Floyd Superior Court to overturn the decision.

"The administration went ahead with this plan without paying attention to the people whose opinions should matter the most: the children, their parents and the workers who provide the needed services at Silvercrest," Cochran said. "Like a bull in a china shop, the Daniels Administration chose to charge ahead and proclaim something needed to be done without looking at all the facts.

"As a state lawmaker, I will have the chance to make sure that Silvercrest's situation gets a full airing in the Indiana General Assembly before the 2006 session is completed," he noted. "The administration will be held accountable for its actions."